

BOOK REVIEWS

motherhood. While the narrative is in the most part personal, it weaves the personal and the academic producing vivid portraits that are sometimes bitter, somewhat sad, but always hopeful. Written by brilliant feminist scholars, this book is a tribute to mothers, on whose shoulders the authors have come to understand feminism and embody it.

Motherhood in Patriarchy: Animosity Toward Mothers in Politics and Feminist Theory — Proposals for Change

Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve.

Leverkusen, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2013.

REVIEWED BY KATHERYNE SCHULZ

Motherhood in Patriarchy is a complex feminist critique of Western patriarchy and its effects on mothers and motherhood. Refreshingly, Tazi-Preve's book positions motherhood as a key political and philosophical issue rather than framing it as a series of fragmented policy problems. Instead, Tazi-Preve traces the domination of mothers to the establishment of patriarchal ideology that views women and nature as exploitable resources. She argues that the goal of patriarchy has been to control and ultimately appropriate women's creative power of reproduction in order to replace it with male controlled reproductive technology.

Tazi-Preve uses Austria as a contemporary case study to illustrate how patriarchy isolates mothers, subordinates the needs of women and children to the market and ignores the realities mothers deal with in raising their children. This analysis is used as a jumping off point to closely examine how the role of mothers has shifted over time from a powerful and honored position in matriarchal societies to a degraded and marginalized position in modern Western society.

Tazi-Preve also examines feminist debates about gender theory and motherhood. Her book builds on the writing of feminist theorists Mies, Werlhof and Bennholdt, co-authors of *Women: The Last Colony*. Contrary to Marx's theory about the centrality of waged labour to capitalism, these three theorists argue that the unwaged labour appropriated from women and peasant men in Third World colonies is a form of primitive accumulation that actually enables capitalism to function. For her part, Tazi-Preve is quite critical of left feminists who critique patriarchy but not Marx's ideas about the benefits of progress and development. In contrast to classic Marxism, Tazi-Preve argues

that the unwaged work that mothers do subsidizes capitalism and enables it to expand using technology that destroys nature and increasingly threatens to replace mothers with patriarchal reproductive technology. From Tazi-Preve's perspective, patriarchal progress inevitably occurs at the expense of women and nature.

While authors such as Silvia Federici (2004) and Mary O'Brien (1981) have also analysed the emergence of patriarchy and its destructive impact on women and mothers, what makes Tazi-Preve's book most interesting is her focus on patriarchy as a historically and geographically specific institution that first emerged in Europe, has proceeded unevenly and that remains unfinished. This analysis is balanced with a thorough examination of matriarchal societies both past and present and Tazi-Preve is able to demonstrate that a large number of matrilineal and matrilocal societies still exist around the world.

As Tazi-Preve points out being aware of these societies and thinking through what non-hierarchical, non-dominating societies might look like and what practices are involved is very important. It would be interesting to hear from her in more detail about what she believes Western feminists can learn from women-centred Indigenous nations. My understanding is that these nations have complex, diverse and culturally specific cosmologies and practices with regard to how people and nature interact, what roles men and women play, how spirituality is practiced, and how territory is defined and consumption is limited. It seems clear that a real appreciation of non-hierarchical, non-dominating societies would include learning about all of these cultural concepts as well as about woman-centred practices.

Further, Indigenous women-centred societies that do exist today are economically marginalized precisely to the degree to which they have resisted assimilation into capitalism, patriarchy and colonial rule by Europeans. Acknowledging that Europeans, including European mothers, benefit from the existing colonial order and finding ways to act in solidarity to undo colonial and class domination as well as patriarchy is a key challenge that confronts Western feminists. Tazi-Preve's contribution to this struggle is to reignite the debate about patriarchy and motherhood at a moment when serious feminist debate and strong leadership are sorely needed.

References

- Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia, 2004.
 O'Brien, Mary. *The Politics of Reproduction*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.